2:Gough E-4, 5 (1947-1949)1961 A W11 Kerala A W11
Central Kerala Nayar

conquests; that is, from 1342, the date of the first useful Arabic account (Gibb, 1929) to the end of the eighteenth century. My sources include English translations of the writings of Arab, Italian, Portuguese, Dutch, and French visitors to Kerala, works by English travelers, government servants, historians, and anthropologists, and a few historical works by Indian scholars who make use of indigenous Malayalam and Sanskrit documents.

Modern changes in Nayar kinship are not evenly distributed throughout the population. Some of the traditional institutions and relationships persist, especially in villages most remote from the seats of government and from modern market centers. Many other traditional usages are remembered by older people. Because of this, my own field work in three villages of Kerala—between November, 1947 and July, 1949—was able to provide me with the organizational framework into which to fit the literary material, and supplied me with many details on the traditional system not hitherto published.[2] Some information was also gleaned from genealogies, manuscript histories of particular lineages, and translations of Malayalam documents relating to land tenure, property transactions, and religious rites.

Modern changes in Nayar kinship comprise a large subject, which I have already briefly treated elsewhere (Gough, 1952*a*; see also Rao, 1957: 74–142). A full account will appear in a forthcoming book.

Ecology

Kerala, or the Malabar Coast, lies in the extreme southwest of India beside the Arabian Sea. The coastline is some 360 miles long, the area about 14,908 square miles. It is divided from the rest of South India by the Western Ghats, a mountain wall broken only in the center by the Palghat Gap. From prehistoric to modern times, migrations took place from the eastern plateau of peninsular India into the coastal region, but until the coming of modern transport the mountains prevented continuous contacts between the people who became established there and their neighbors to the east. On the other hand, its position laid Kerala open to contacts by sea with many peoples, including Jews and Arabs (from perhaps 800 B.C.), Egyptians and Phoenicians (ca. fifth century B.C.), Romans (first century A.D.), Chi-

[2] My field work in three villages of Central and North Kerala was made possible by the grant of a William Wyse Studentship from Trinity College, Cambridge, and of an Anthony Wilkin Studentship from the Faculty of Archaeology and Anthropology, University of Cambridge. The preparation and writing of these chapters have been carried out with the aid of two grants from the Social Science Research Council, in 1954 and 1958.

7:Gough E-5 (1947-1949) 1955 AWII Kerala AWII
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Female Initiation Rites on the Malabar Coast

Curl Bequest Prize Essay, 1953[*]

E. KATHLEEN GOUGH

INTRODUCTION

UNTIL TWENTY YEARS AGO, the *tālikettukalyāṇam* (*tāli*-tying marriage) was performed by almost all the castes of Malabar below Brahmans and above the lowest 'exterior' castes.[1] I confine this discussion to four groups with different kinship systems: the matrilineal, uxorilocal Nayars of South Malabar District and Cochin; the matrilineal, virilocal Nayars of North Malabar District; the matrilineal, virilocal Tiyyars of North Malabar District; and the double unilineal, patrilocal Tiyyars of South Malabar and Cochin.[2]

This girls' initiation ceremony was apparently first described in 1510 by Duarte Barbosa, a Portuguese traveller. Since that date, there have been descriptions of the ceremony by other Portuguese, Dutch, and East India Company writers, and in the past sixty years much controversy between Indian and British anthropologists about its origin and meaning. Yet no one, as far as I know, has recognized its significance in terms of the total kinship systems of the castes who performed it.[3] My first task has therefore been to describe the *tāli*-rite in each caste and to discuss its social function in the kinship system; I do so in Parts I to IV of the essay. In these, I have used the reports of previous writers which, since the rite died out about twenty years ago, are in many cases better than those I collected from informants. At the same time, for a full interpretation of the rite, I found it necessary to incorporate some of my own general field data on Nayar and Tiyyar kinship, collected in 1947-9. My field work was carried out in a South Malabar village (Walluvanād subdivision) for six months, in a Cochin village for eight months, and in a North Malabar village (Kottayam subdivision) for eight months.[4]

Having analyzed, as far as I was able, the social function of the ceremony, I found that, as perhaps with all rites, many of its features were not explicable in terms of social function and of conscious motivations. While it was possible to show, in a general way, how in each case the ceremony was in harmony with the pattern of kinship relations in these groups, it was not possible to explain sociologically why certain persons should take part in the rites, rather than other persons, why certain material objects should be used, and indeed, why it should be necessary to perform this ceremony at all. It seemed to me that the answer to these problems lay in unconscious motivations common to the members of these castes, and could

[*][Two Curl Bequest Prizes were awarded for the year 1953, one to the writer of the present essay and the other to Mr H. N. C. Stevenson, O.B.E., for his essay 'Status Evaluation in the Hindu Caste System', which appeared in the last volume of the JOURNAL. – ED.]

[1] For a brief analysis of modern changes in Nayar kinship see Gough (1952). For a fuller analysis of modern changes in the Tiyyar system see Aiyappan (1944).

[2] The Tiyyars are called Iravas or Chovans in some parts of South Malabar, Cochin, and Travancore. For convenience, I use 'Tiyyars' throughout.

[3] Dr Aiyappan (1942; 1944, pp. 159-62) has made the most comprehensive study of Malabar *tāli*-rites. He concludes that in most of the castes the *tāli*-rite is 'nothing more than an initiatory rite, preliminary to attaining marriageable status'. While I agree with him, I think that this conclusion begs the question and does not explain the function or motivations of the rite.

[4] My field work was made possible by the grant of a William Wyse Studentship from Trinity College, Cambridge, and of an Anthony Wilkin Studentship from the Faculty of Archaeology and Anthropology, University of Cambridge.

10:Nakane E-5 (1955-1956) 1962 AWll Kerala AWll
Nayar

[p. 17]

The Nayar Family in a Disintegrating Matrilineal System[1]

CHIE NAKANE

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Introduction

IN this short essay, I will present one case of the disintegration of a Nayar *tarwad* (matrilineal joint family), based on the materials collected by myself.

The general institutional system of a traditional Nayar *tarwad* is already well known, and has been much discussed recently by anthropologists, including K. Gough.[2] Here I state it briefly as a preface to the main discussion. A traditional Nayar *tarwad* was a property group consisting of a matrilineal lineage exclusively, headed and represented by the senior male member, called *karanavan*. Normally the members of a *tarwad* formed a distinguishable domestic unit. Spouses of the members of a *tarwad* resided in the *tarwad* where they were born, and a husband visited his wife at her *tarwad* at night and returned early morning.[3] The father had no duty or obligation on his own children, instead, the *karanavan* was the legal guardian of the offspring of the female members of the *tarwad*.

The Nayars are one of the Hindu upper castes in Kerala, next to the Nambudri Brahman, and traditionally the majority of the Nayars had been land holders or managers, not cultivators. On such a social and economic base, the function of the *tarwad* had been maintained. Various factors have led to the disintegration of the *tarwad* system, the major cause of which, I think, was the economic changes accompanied by modernization since the beginning of the

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1 This essay is one of the outcomes of my field work on matrilineal systems in India (1955–56) carried out by the generous grant of the Elin Wagner Foundation in Sweden, to which my profound acknowledgement goes. Also I am very thankful for the help of Dr. John Mogey.

2 E. Kathleen Gough: "Changing kinship usages in the setting of political and economic change among the Nayars of Malabar," *J. R. Anthrop. Inst.* 82, pp. 71–87; "A comparison of incest prohibitions and the rules of exogamy in three matrilineal groups of the Malabal," *International Achives of Ethnography*, Vol. XLVI, Part I, 1952, pp. 82–105.

3 The *karanavan* was an exception: he could take his wife and children in his *tarwad*. In North Malabar, not only the *karanavan*, but also other male members used to take their wives and children to their *tarwad*. However, these wives, including children, had to leave their husband's *tarwad*, as soon as their husband died.

11: India G-4, 5 (1960-1961) 1962 AW11 Kerala AW11

would still leave a backlog of about 4.7 lakhs unemployed persons in 1970-71. However, the proportion of unemployed persons to the total population would have been reduced from 4.2 per cent to 2.3 per cent.

It may thus be seen that in spite of certain optimistic assumption regarding creation of employment opportunities and a reduction in the intensity of unemployment, the number of unemployed persons by 1970-71 would be large for a State like Kerala. In the long run an effective solution to the over-population of Kerala can only be provided by a reduction in the rate of population growth through intensification of Family Planning Programmes and migration to other parts of India. The need for widespread use of family planning methods and measures to promote migration, is all the more urgent in a region like Kerala where population density is high, rate of growth of population is rapid, and an acute unemployment problem exists. More reliance on measures to create additional employment opportunities within the State is not enough.

This survey like other similar surveys was undertaken by a team of National Council economists and technicians headed initially by Dr. B. Natarajan and later by myself with the assistance specially of Mr. A.K. Mathur and Mr. S.R. Bose both of whom spent considerable time in the State. At the specific request of the Government of Kerala, the Director-General directed the enquiry in all its stages and visited the State on a number of occasions and guided the team. The names of persons who participated in the survey are listed in appendix 1. To all of them, specially to Mr. Mathur on whom the task of drafting the preliminary report fell, I wish to express my thanks. I would also like to acknowledge the help and cooperation received from the Government and the officers of the Kerala Government, specially the Director of Industries in the various stages of the survey. Finally, to the Minister for Industry, Mr. K.A. Damodara Menon I am specially indebted for his continuous interest in the survey and for the support and encouragement he gave to our staff.

P.S. LOKANATHAN
Director General

NEW DELHI
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12:Peter E-5 (1939, 1949)1963 AW11 Kerala AW11
Toda AW60
Tibet AJ1
West Tibetans AJ4
[p. 584]

APPENDIX 2

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

In all four fields of my ethnographical research, Ceylon, Kerala, the Nilgiris and the Himalayas, I was obliged to make use of informants and interpreters in order to carry out the work. Only in Kalimpong, when I had set up my headquarters there from 1950 to 1956, did I eventually do without interpreters, having learnt Tibetan sufficiently well towards 1952 to be able to dispense with assistance of this kind. Nevertheless, I remained, of course, dependent on informants.

To all these helpers in the field I am extremely grateful, because without their aid it would have been impossible to carry out the ethnographic study. Except for Kerala, where I have been expressly asked not to make any specific mentions, I would like to thank each and every one personally by name. In the case of the interpreter with whom I worked among the Todas, I would also like to give a short synopsis of his personality and life-history, because it appears to me essential that it is realized fully through what human medium the necessary information was gathered and contact with the tribe established.

In Ceylon, concerning Mr. G. H. Ellawala with whom I worked in Ratnapura, I cannot sufficiently express how great is my debt towards him. Not only did he take time off to accompany me to the dwellings of some of his poorest and most humble tenants (and all those of my readers who know the Orient will appreciate what this means), but he also acted as interpreter himself during our visits and supplied me with much honest and outspoken information in explanation of the material that I was gathering. Long after I had left Ceylon, he furthermore very willingly wrote to me additional data of which I was in need, replying promptly and fully to the, sometimes for him, obscure questions which I put to him about marriage rules and the patrilineal and matrilineal descent groups in the Kandyan provinces.

In Kerala, thanks to the kindness and hospitality of the managing director of the Metal Industries Ltd., Shoranur, Sri A. N. Poduval, I

12:Peter E-5 (1939, 1949) 1963 AW11 Kerala AW11 Toda AW60

was able to park my caravan in the compound of the factory, and from there to conduct my work in the surrounding villages, both in the Walluvanad taluk and in north Cochin. I am greatly indebted to the then Collector of Malabar, Sri Prasad, for the assistance rendered to me during my stay in Kerala, for without this help it would not have been possible to gather so much information in so short a time.

Thanks are also due to Dr. A. Aiyappan, Superintendent of the Government Museum, Egmore, Madras, my fellow-student at the London School of Economics where we both attended the seminars and lectures of the late Professor Br. Malinowski. Through Dr. Aiyappan's never failing advice and active interest I saved considerable time and effort in going straight to that part of Kerala most propitious for the study of polyandry.

While working in the Nilgiris, both before and after World War II, it would have been good to have been able to speak Toda. It would have enabled me to gather information direct, which would have been an incomparable asset during my long period of research in that area. From the wider point of view, it did not seem worth while, however, to go to the trouble of learning Toda. It is spoken by only a very small number of individuals who, being themselves illiterate, have no literature at all. It is besides a Dravidian tongue, and therefore difficult for Europeans to master quickly. I felt that I would prefer to concentrate later on acquiring Tibetan, something which would be of far wider use to me in very many fields other than the relatively narrow study of polyandry.

I therefore turned down the idea of learning the language and, because of this, was obliged to work through an interpreter. In the choice of the latter, I was exceptionally fortunate. Very early, during the first months of my stay in the Nilgiris, in the summer of 1939, thanks to the help of Miss C. F. Ling of the Church of England Zenana Mission, I got to know Kanvarsathi-Sunderdoss, a Christian Toda convert, who had previously served Dr. M. B. Emeneau, of the University of California at Berkeley, in a like capacity, for three years, and who was to prove just as excellent an assistant to me as he had been to this predecessor of mine among the Todas.

Kanvarsathi, although belonging to the little colony of Christian Todas described by Emeneau (*The Christian Todas*, see Bibliography), was far from having developed an aversion for his heathen fellows. What was more, he was liked and accepted to a remarkable degree by the latter, a most happy state of affairs when it came to making use of